

MINUTES
of the Meeting
of the
Standing Commission
1977
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Commission on Faith and Order

Faith and Order Paper No. 83

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C O M M I S S I O N O N F A I T H A N D O R D E R

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDING COMMISSION

held at

Kloster Loccum, Federal Republic of Germany

July 18-25, 1977

Faith and Order Paper No. 83

World Council of Churches
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

Geneva 1977
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The first meeting of the newly constituted Faith and Order Standing Commission was held from 18 - 25 July 1977 at Loccum, Federal Republic of Germany. The meeting was opened with Bible reading and prayer, led by the Moderator, Professor Nikos Nissiotis; each day's proceedings were opened with a period of prayer led by members of the Standing Commission, and at noon each day a service of intercession was held during which the concerns and hopes of churches in specific areas were described by a member coming from the area. On Friday, July 22, a service of Holy Communion according to the Lutheran tradition was held, in which all members of the Commission were invited to participate.

On Wednesday, July 20, members were entertained at a Reception given by the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD). Bischof Hans-Heinrich Harms of Oldenburg addressed the Commission on behalf of the EKD and Vizepräsident H.-Ph. Meyer spoke on behalf of Professor Eduard Lohse, Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Hanover which hosted the Commission at Kloster Loccum. The Moderator spoke on behalf of the Commission.

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I OPENING ACTIONS

The Moderator, Professor Nikos Nissiotis, welcomed the members to this first meeting of the Standing Commission, as constituted under the new Rules of the World Council of Churches. Many were present for the first time and he looked forward with joy to working with the new Commission on matters concerning Faith and Order.

Speaking on behalf of the Church in Loccum, Rektor Holze expressed the pleasure felt by the Church at being able to welcome members of the Standing Commission to Loccum. It was a grief to all concerned that Bishop Lilje, who had so much looked forward to this occasion, had died on the even of Epiphany; he had been Abbot of the Monastery in which the meeting was being held and it would have given him great pleasure to act as host. Unfortunately his successor, Bishop Eduard Lohse, was away but he had asked Rektor Holze to express to the Commission a welcome in his name. The Rektor hoped that the fact that the meeting was being held in a place where concern for the unity of the Church had existed for so many centuries would create an atmosphere helpful to the discussions which were to take place.

ROLL CALL

The following were present:

<u>Moderator:</u>	Prof. Nikos NISSIOTIS
<u>Members:</u>	Dr. Kamol ARAYAPRATEEP Rev. S. Wesley ARIARAJAH Prof. Ivar ASHEIM Protopresbyter Vitaly BOROVOY Dr. Ulrich KUHN Dom Emmanuel LANNE Prof. Jan M. LOCHMAN Mrs. Florence MAHONEY Dr. André MAMPILA Prof. Keiji OGAWA Prof. Wolfhart PANNENBERG Rev. Jeanne Audrey POWERS Dr. Karoly PROHLE Rev. Ardi SOEJATNO Mrs. Mary TANNER Rev. Fr. Jean M.R. TILLARD Rt. Rev. Desmond TUTU Rev. Ilda VENCE Rev. Peggy WAY Dr. W.M.S. WEST Prof. Gayraud WILMORE
<u>Substitute:</u>	Fr. Leonid KISHKOVSKY (for Fr. Thomas HOPKO)
<u>Guests:</u>	Mr. Martin CONWAY Rev. Fr. Pierre DUPREY Mr. Elias JONES Dr. Jorge LARA-BRAUD Rev. Constance PARVEY

Staff: Rev. Stephen CRANFORD
 Dr. Geiko MÜLLER-FAHRENHOLZ
 Mrs. Renate SBEGHEN
 Dr. Choan-seng SONG
 Dr. Lukas VISCHER
 Miss Anne WILLIAMSON

Minute Secretary: Miss Verleigh CANT

APOLOGIES

Metropolitan BARTHOLOMEW (Archondonis)
 Dr. Paul A. CROW
 Prof. John DESCHNER
 Fr. Thomas HOPKO
 Dr. Béla LESKO
 Rev. Seth NOMENYO
 Prof. Dumitru POPESCU
 Dr. Juan STAM

A cable had been received from Professor John Deschner just before the meeting opened saying that he was unable to attend owing to the death of his father; it was agreed that a message be sent to him from members of the Commission expressing remembrance and sympathy in his loss.

AGENDA AND TIME-TABLE

The Director presented a draft agenda and time-table; these were approved and adopted.

II REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

The staff surveyed in a detailed report the programme and activities of the Faith and Order Commission in the period from 1976-1977.

i) Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the First World Conference of Faith and Order (Lausanne, May 26-June 5, 1977)

The plan to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first meeting of the Commission in 1927 had been proposed at the meeting of the Faith and Order Standing Commission in Ariccia (cf. For the Years Ahead, pp. 17-18). It had seemed fitting that the second and third generations of those engaged in the Faith and Order Movement should remember those who had planned and carried out the first meeting fifty years ago. There had been three main elements in the celebration - (a) the academic programme which took place in the University of Lausanne; (b) a 'popular' programme which included worship celebrations arranged by the Youth Council of Taizé, the Focolari Movement and the International Ecumenical Fellowship; and (c) a consultation to evaluate the replies of the churches to the agreed statements on Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry. It had been encouraging to see the wide-spread support that had been given to the celebrations, and particular gratitude was owed to the Reformed Church of the Canton de Vaud for the support and help it had given. The experience of working with various movements which had helped to provide the programme for the celebrations was a valuable one. The wide echo which the celebrations found also raised the question whether more opportunity should be taken of making a wider appeal to local congregations through such events.

The major addresses given during the celebrations were being prepared for the press and would be published shortly in English, French and German.

ii) The Election of the Plenary Commission

For the first time in its history the Faith and Order Commission had not been elected by a direct vote of the Assembly, but by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. In 1975 at its meeting in Nairobi the Central Committee had elected a small Core Group of ten members; this group had met in Ariccia in April 1976 and the result of the discussions there were summarised in the booklet For the Years Ahead (Faith and Order Paper no. 80). The Faith and Order Nominations Committee, appointed at Accra in 1974, worked out proposals for membership of the Plenary Commission and the list was submitted to the WCC Central Committee in the summer of 1976. It had proved very difficult to obtain from the churches the approval of a sufficient number of women, and therefore the Faith and Order Nominations Committee did not propose the full number of 120 but asked Central Committee to appoint only 100, giving instructions that the remaining 20 seats should be filled according to certain categories. At its meeting in February 1977, the WCC Executive Committee filled the remaining 20 seats, the full Commission thus duly being elected (see Appendix II).

As in the previous period, the various World Families of Churches were invited to appoint 'liaison officers' with the Faith and Order Commission. Dr Vischer drew attention to the fact that one member of the Commission, Dean Nam Dong Suh, of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, was under arrest and had received a prison sentence (see below p.31).

At the suggestion of the Nominations Committee the Secretariat had established a Mailing List of persons who would regularly receive the material sent to members of the Plenary Commission. In addition to the former Commission members, friends of the Faith and Order Movement were included in this list.

The first meeting of the new Plenary Commission was envisaged for the summer of 1978, and since the new Plenary Commission had never met in Asia it was suggested that consideration should be given to the possibility of meeting at the Ecumenical Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore. (For action on this proposal see below p. 15f).

iii) 'Giving Account of the Hope that is within us'

A consultation to discuss the future programme for the study had been held in March 1977 at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, the report of which had been circulated to members of the Standing Commission (see below p. 11f). During the past year the emphasis was placed on regional efforts: (a) collaboration with the Conference of European Churches, (b) preparation for a meeting of Latin American theologians in Costa Rica (to be held in December 1977), (c) contacts with Professor Robert McAfee Brown on the possibility of a contribution from the United States, and (d) response to the memorandum of East European church leaders formulated at the meeting in Budapest (March 29-30, 1977).

Publications had been prepared in connexion with the study, as follows:

(a) Three booklets with texts relevant to the Study

Study Encounter XI, 2, 1975: Giving Account of Hope and Salvation

(In preparation for the Nairobi Assembly's discussion on "Confessing Christ Today", Faith and Order and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism prepared this series of reports on the theme of hope and salvation.)

Study Encounter XII, 1-2, 1976: Giving Account of the Hope in These Testing Times

(This volume presents various accounts of hope which arise out of the 'testing times' in which most Christians find themselves today. Reports from the United States, Germany, Japan, Korea and Taiwan.)

Faith and Order Paper no. 81: Giving Account of the Hope

(This small volume contains several accounts of hope from churches and Christian groups in various parts of the

world which are part of the Faith and Order study 'Giving Account of the Hope that is within us'.)

- (b) How to do Theology by C.S. Song (also available in German under the title Theologie im Entstehen)
- (c) The Cross in Different Cultures by H.-R. Weber, to be published later this year.
- iv) Unity of the Church - Unity of Humankind

Dr Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz reported on the study on the Unity of the Church - Unity of Humankind. Three decisions had been taken at Accra - (a) not to continue the study in its general form but to attempt a summary of work so far achieved; (b) to provide a brief summary of the study for popular use; (c) to engage in collaboration with other sub-units of the World Council on questions arising from the study.

Dr Müller-Fahrenholz reported that the summary of the study process was ready and that contributions covering various aspects relevant to it were now being sought. It was aimed at producing the summary together with the contributions by the end of 1977. A popular version appeared in German in the form of a slide and poster set under the title: The People of this World Belong Together. English and French adaptations were in preparation.

Dr Müller-Fahrenholz outlined various collaborative efforts which had taken place during the year. These efforts had included strong participation by Faith and Order Commission members in the recent Chiangmai conference on Dialogue in Community (for action see below p. 31f) and participation in plans for initiating a theological study on 'The Community of Women and Men in the Church' (see below p. 28f). A book was being prepared for publication in both English and German on 'The Handicapped in the Responsibility of the Church'. It was hoped that this would serve as a useful reference and work-book for those concerned about the adequate place and role of the disabled in the life of the churches.

v) The Unity of the Church

Dr Vischer said that the Section II Report 'What Unity Requires' at Nairobi had found a widespread echo, and the debate still continued. The Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches had devoted most of its last session to the subject; the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity had organized a special consultation on Section II in May 1977; the Assembly of the Conference of Churches in Asia in Penang, June 1977, had given major attention to the issues contained in the report; and the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Dar-es-Salaam had discussed in detail the acceptability of the concept of conciliar fellowship. A consultation on the theme would be organized by the Conference of European Churches in Sofia in October 1977. At its meeting in Ariccia the Core Group had

suggested that a small consultation should be arranged to work out a document giving further content and clarity to the issues raised in Section II (cf. For the Years Ahead, p. 15), but unfortunately this had not proved practicable owing to the staffing position.

In December 1976 the Secretariat had organized a consultation on the meaning of the phrase 'local church' in the Nairobi statement on conciliar fellowship. The report of this consultation had been sent to all participants in Nairobi Section II and is now also available in print, together with the papers presented at the consultation (In Each Place - Towards a Fellowshipship of Local Churches Truly United, WCC, Geneva 1977).

Efforts had been made during the year to follow up the recommendations made in the report of Section II regarding -

(a) Relations with Confessional Families

Dr Vischer emphasized that in speaking of world confessional families the reference was not simply to bodies as the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, but to all confessional traditions. The WCC was now engaged in a review of its relationship to the various confessional families. In the next eighteen months the WCC will seek the opportunity for conversations with each World Confessional Family individually, with the purpose to discover how the future relationship might best be recast. The findings will be discussed at a consultation with representatives from various families and then be reported to the Central Committee in January 1979.

(b) Within this framework the Faith and Order Secretariat had organized, in collaboration with the World Confessional Families, a consultation to work out details of a proposal for a Forum for the Evaluation of Bilateral Conversations. The Rev. Stephen Cranford, the staff member holding special responsibility for this aspect, said that the Forum had been set up to provide opportunity for churches engaged in bilateral conversations to consult together and provide a place for the exchange of information so that their negotiations could be carried on with a greater awareness of what was going on in other bilateral conversations. The first meeting of the Forum would take place from April 1-8, 1978, at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, on the theme 'Concepts of Unity'.

Dr Vischer reminded members of the work done by Prof. Nils Ehrenström in relation to bilateral conversations. It was necessary to consider the question how information regarding such conversations could be maintained. Professor Ehrenström was at present engaged in a very significant study on Ecumenical Guidelines which deserved the attention and the support of the Standing Commission.

(c) United Churches and Union Negotiations

A meeting of representatives of United Churches had been held in Toronto in June 1975. They had named a continuation committee and asked the Faith and Order Secretariat to accept responsibility for its work for a period of two years. The continuation committee would meet in Geneva from August 7-10, 1977 and would discuss relations between United Churches and their role in the ecumenical movement. The Secretariat continued to follow developments in the field of union negotiations and a survey would be published in 1978. Meantime Dr Vischer was glad to report that negotiations in Australia had been brought to a successful conclusion and the Uniting Church in Australia had come into existence on 22 June 1977. Negotiations in various countries in Africa were at an early stage and needed active encouragement. A matter for consideration was what responsibility the Commission had toward such negotiations, and in what ways it could render help.

(d) One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry

In the past months major work had been done with regard to the three agreed statements. The Faith and Order Secretariat had had the help of Dr Bert Hoedemaker in the evaluation of the responses received from the member churches to the statements. He had produced a detailed survey of all replies received and a group of forty theologians had met at Crêt-Bérard from May 30 to June 4, 1977 to evaluate the replies and to prepare a report. Copies of this report had been circulated to members of the Standing Commission and after discussion and comment it would be passed to the Central Committee for action. Dr Vischer suggested that the main issues requiring attention at the present stage were: What do we mean by consensus? How can the process of reception be accelerated? What is the role of the Commission in the process of consensus building for further discussion and action? (See below p. 19f)

(e) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Proposed Calendar of Mutual Intercession

As in previous years the Secretariat had prepared, in collaboration with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, material for the 1978 Week of Prayer, copies of which had been circulated to members for information. The programme now being developed went considerably beyond preparation of material for the Week of Prayer. A call had been issued at Nairobi for more mutual intercession by the member churches of the World Council, and the project now in hand was to produce a Calendar of Mutual Intercession for use in the Ecumenical Centre and in the churches. Considerably more work had been involved than had at first been anticipated but the first draft was now available. A consultation would be held at the Ecumenical Institute from September 29 to October 2 to give further thought to the launching of the Calendar and to reflect on its implications.

vi) Further Projects

Dr Vischer referred to the following projects presently on the agenda of Faith and Order:

(a) How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today?

A working paper had been published in English and German, and would later appear in French. Study groups had been formed in a number of European countries and at the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church a consultation would be held in Odessa from October 10-16, 1977. Dr Anton Houtepen had been made available to the Secretariat to prepare for this meeting and to provide a background paper. The report of the consultation would be presented to the Plenary Commission in the summer of 1978.

(b) Church-State Relations

In collaboration with the Ecumenical Institute the Secretariat had organized a consultation on Church-State Relations from August 19-25, 1976. Copies of the report had been circulated to members of the Standing Commission, and it was also available in print in French and Spanish.

(c) Authority of the Bible, especially the Old Testament

Several groups and individuals had shown an interest in the study and had sent in their reactions to a paper drawn up by the Dutch Ecumenical Group. These had been collated by Dr Ellen Flesseman-van Leer and she had prepared a report which would serve as a starting-point for further discussion. A small consultation was to be held in Loccum immediately following the present meeting to evaluate the situation and to consider the desirability of formulating a report for presentation to the Plenary Commission.

(d) List of Dissertations

At the suggestion of the Ariccia meeting a list of dissertations had been prepared, in collaboration with the Library of the Ecumenical Centre (see For the Years Ahead, p. 21). This booklet will be made available to all members of the Commission and to those named on the mailing list.

vii) Relations with the Roman Catholic Church

The position in relation to the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches had changed somewhat since it was first set up, in that Roman Catholic theologians were now fully involved in all the studies being carried on by Faith and Order. This presented some problems of duplication since many of the matters dealt with in the Joint Working Group were also dealt with by the Commission. The minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Working Group, held in Utrecht from October 4-8, 1976 had been circulated to members of the Standing Commission. These con-

tained detailed proposals for a joint study on the Unity of the Church - the Goal and the Way, responsibility for which on the side of the World Council of Churches would be carried by the Faith and Order Secretariat. The Joint Working Group also agreed to engage in a study on the possibilities of common witness. Both studies were long-term efforts aimed at providing material for the next official report of the Joint Working Group.

viii) Staffing

At present the regular budget of the World Council provides only two posts in the Faith and Order Secretariat. Due to the critical financial situation of the World Council the Executive Committee had decided to leave vacant the third place. The two posts are held by the Director and Dr C.S. Song. After a year's leave of absence Dr C.S. Song had now resumed his responsibilities in Geneva.

In addition, Dr Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz has been seconded to the Secretariat by the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Rev. Stephen Cranford by the Christian Church (Disciples). The appointment of the Rev. Constance Parvey with responsibility for the study on 'The Community of Women and Men in the Church' had been made possible through special contributions. If the Secretariat was to carry out adequately the tasks remitted to it, it was necessary that it should be strengthened: at this time Orthodox and Roman Catholic staff members were particularly required. The Secretariat had been grateful to receive temporary or part-time help during the past months from Dr Bert Hoedemaker, Dr Anton Houtepen, Barbara von Teichman and Professor Nils Ehrenström, and hoped that such temporary assistance might continue to be possible in the future.

Meantime it should be reaffirmed that the third post on the central budget should be re-established as soon as this became financially possible.

ix) Finance

The financial situation presented considerable problems. In the period between Uppsala and Nairobi Assemblies substantial grants from foundations had been received, but these had not been renewed. This meant that money required to carry out the programme activities had to be raised. Dr Vischer gave some details on the financial situation and suggested that members might bear in mind the need to raise the funds necessary for carrying on of the work, and especially suggest possible sources to which specific requests might be directed.

x) Conclusion

In conclusion Dr Vischer said that the main concern of Faith and Order was for the Unity of the Church. It was important that the Commission should be seen as a focus for this search, which was not the concern simply of the Secretariat

but of the whole Commission, and particularly of the Standing Commission. It was his hope that members would speak in the churches and among their constituencies in that conviction, indicating to the Secretariat what help they might need for the task.

The Moderator called for discussion of the report after which it was agreed that the Standing Commission should divide into four groups to discuss the following major themes:

- i. The Study 'Giving Account of the Hope' and the preparations for the meeting of the Plenary Commission at Bangalore
(moderator: Prof. J. Lochman)
- ii. Towards an ecumenical consensus on Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry
(moderator: Dr M. West)
- iii. The visible unity of the Church - the goal and the way
(moderator: Dr J. Lara-Braud)
- iv. The Community of Women and Men in the Church
(moderator: Rev. C. Parvey)

An ad hoc group consisting of Rev. Jeanne Audrey Powers, Rev. Wesley Ariarajah, Dr André Mampila, Prof. Jan Lochman, Prof. Nikos Nissiotis and the Director and meeting in the evenings was asked to review all other issues arising from the staff report.

III THE RESPONSE OF THE STANDING COMMISSION

i) Meeting of the Plenary Commission at Bangalore

Dr Vischer presented to the Standing Commission the paper which had been worked out at the consultation held at the Ecumenical Institute from March 20-24, 1977 (see above p. 4). The proposal reads as follows:

- (a) Report of the consultation held at Bossey to the Faith and Order Standing Commission on the continuation of the study 'Giving Account of the Hope' and the programme of the meeting of the Plenary Commission

1. The Background

The study 'Giving Account of the Hope that is within us' was first suggested at the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Louvain (1971); it was launched a year later at the meeting of the Faith and Order Working Committee in Utrecht (1972). In the last five years the project has been one of the priorities of the Faith and Order Commission. Time has now come to review the work so far achieved and to prepare for the next stage.

The study 'was based on the conviction that (1) churches and Christians have the obligation in every new age to confess afresh, in the language of that age, their faith in Christ; (2) they must strive for expressions of the Christian faith within different cultural worlds and in diversified social, political and religious situations; (3) the divided churches might rediscover their unity by letting themselves be reconstituted by the truth of the Gospel' (Uniting in Hope, p. 25).

The study was to proceed in two stages. The initiative was primarily to be with the churches, Christian groups and individuals in different parts of the world. The Commission therefore did not launch the study by appointing an international commission to formulate a statement on the Christian faith, but issued an invitation to the churches and groups within the churches that they should make an attempt at articulating the faith and the hope within them in the situation which they face. The primary emphasis was on the authentic expression of Christian faith and hope in particular contexts.

In the second stage of the study and on the basis of the responses received, the Commission on Faith and Order was to reflect on the possibility of a common account. How can the one Gospel be affirmed and proclaimed together by all churches? What are the criteria for the churches to recognize each other in the vast variety of expressions of faith as part of the one Church of Jesus Christ? What can be undertaken to strengthen the commitment of the churches in the ecumenical movement to form a confessing community?

The invitation of the Faith and Order Commission found a wide response. In many countries, study groups were formed (ca. 50) and many of them have sent in their accounts of hope.

In some countries, churches have responded by making the study a project in their congregations (cf. particularly the project of the National Council of Churches in the Netherlands). In other countries, independently from the invitation, churches were already engaged in working out affirmations of faith for their congregations and members. In yet other countries, churches or groups facing a particular political situation have been led to confess afresh their Christian convictions; we have also attempted to collect such material. It must be added, however, that the material which has so far become available remains fragmentary and needs to be supplemented. (For instance, there are not yet enough accounts from Africa and Asia, certain confessional traditions have more actively participated than others, etc.)

At the Accra meeting of the Faith and Order Commission (1974), a selection of the material then available was studied under ten themes and a first attempt was made at providing a statement in which the tension between the integrity of different particular accounts and the necessity for some account of our one hope was frankly faced. The first part, in traditional biblical language, recalls the one hope which unites all Christians; the second gives a description of particular accounts coming from different cultural and political contexts; the third expresses the commitment to form one fellowship of witness and service, despite the diversity of expressions; and the fourth offers a number of testimonies of hope. Though the statement does not yet provide an adequate solution of the tension between the oneness of the Gospel and the diversity of approaches, its structures may prove to be relevant in future discussion. Many groups have used the Accra statement and have been stimulated in their work, especially by the fourth part.

The Fifth Assembly in Nairobi has provided a new basis for the study 'Giving Account of the Hope'; there was expressed a new readiness to speak together of the heart of the Christian commitment.

Section I was devoted to the theme 'Confessing Christ Today'. The report of that Section, which specifically recommends the churches to take the 'Giving Account of Hope' study into account in the follow-up of the Assembly, will be studied by the churches.

Section II 'What Unity Requires' underlined the need for common witness in the search for unity. 'The churches should undertake a common effort to receive, re-appropriate and confess together as contemporary occasion requires, the Christian truth and faith, delivered through the Apostles and handed down through the centuries. Such common action, arising from free and inclusive discussion under the commonly acknowledged authority of God's Word, must aim both to clarify and to embody the unity and the diversity which are proper to the Church's life and mission' (Faith and Order Paper no. 77, What Unity Requires, p. 71).

2. Confessing the Faith and the Unity of the Church

In order to fulfil this recommendation, the Faith and Order Commission needs to commit itself to work towards a common confession of the Christian truth and faith. It needs to consider it as one of its primary tasks to enable the churches to reach unity in faith and to express it in appropriate ways.

The description of the 'unity we seek' adopted by the Fifth Assembly stresses the need for unity in the apostolic faith. Since the description is meant to inspire and determine the agenda of the Faith and Order Commission it follows that the Commission should direct its efforts towards the elaboration of a common confession of faith. Obviously, the churches disagree on the content and the form of the Church's confession of faith; some would even call into question the need for any common statement. Therefore, the churches need to study the question of the ways in which the Church needs to express its allegiance to the apostolic faith. Parallel to the question of the 'unity we seek' the churches need to clarify the question of the 'confession of faith' which they are called to 'seek' in the ecumenical movement.

The second stage of the study 'Giving Account of the Hope that is within us' provides an excellent context to initiate this clarification. It is therefore proposed that the Faith and Order Commission now engage in the second stage of the study and reflect on the possibility of a common account of hope within the vast diversity of expressions of faith which can be found at present in the churches. The next meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in summer 1978 should be used to serve this purpose.

Three important reminders:

(a) The invitation to participate in the study 'Giving Account of the Hope' has not always been free from misunderstandings. What was asked for? A summary of the Christian faith or an account of the Christian hope? Of course, faith and hope are closely connected. Faith in Jesus Christ is the reason of the hope which pervades the life of Christians. It makes, however, a considerable difference whether attention concentrates on faith or on hope. While faith includes all themes of the creed, hope refers to the future which God opens to those who believe.

(b) What does then the second stage of the study aim at? A confession of faith or a common account of Christian hope? Clearly the latter. Though, ultimately the Commission has to prepare the way for the churches to confess the Christian faith together. The divisions among the churches are still too deep to envisage this goal. But despite their persisting divisions the churches can speak together of the hope which they have in the present situation. Since most confessional traditions have not yet extensively and authoritatively dealt with the theme of hope, the churches are relatively free in this area. They can formulate their response in the light of the challenges of the modern world and they will find that,

often, despite the difference of their inherited confessions of faith, they are driven to similar accounts of hope. Compared with the Church's confession of faith an account of hope can be the witness of the Church or of a group or movement within the Church.

(c) It would be misleading to draw too sharp a distinction between a confession of faith and an account of hope. A common account of hope is an important step on the way to the common confession of faith. If the churches can agree on speaking together of their hope they will be led to see their different confessions of faith in a new light. They will begin to discover in what ways the one Church of the future could possibly confess the one faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Proposed Programme of the Meeting of the Faith and Order Commission (1978)

The study 'Giving Account of the Hope' should be chosen as the main focus of the next meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission in 1978.

The Commission should be asked to deal with three tasks - responding to particular accounts, formulating a common account, and reflecting on a possible future common confession of faith.

A. Responding to particular accounts of hope

The Commission should prepare responses to a selected number of 'accounts of hope'. During the first days of the meeting the Commission should be divided into 8-10 groups. A particular account would be assigned to each of these groups. The group will be asked to formulate its reaction and attempt an answer to the following questions (i) How do we understand the account in its context? (ii) What are the implications of the account for the churches in other parts of the world? (iii) What are the implications of the account for a possible common account? (iv) What are the implications of the effort at a common account for the particular accounts?

B. Formulating a common account

The Commission should then attempt to formulate a common account of hope. With the many particular accounts of hope in mind it should try to discern the themes which are common to all churches in the present situation.

In order to prepare for this discussion a preliminary draft should be worked out. A small drafting group should begin work as soon as possible after the meeting of the Standing Commission in July 1977. The draft should be ready in time to be sent to the participants before the meeting. The Plenary Commission should start its discussion with this text having, of course, full freedom to use, change or discard it. Participants should be informed of this process and be invited to send written suggestions to the drafting group.

The drafting group should make use of the following two texts:

(a) The statement worked out by the Faith and Order Commission in Accra.

(b) 'Christ our Hope', the report of the Advisory Commission on the theme of the Evanston Assembly (1954). This text should be re-examined in order to sharpen the focus of the discussion. How has the issue of Christian hope changed in twenty-five years?

A procedure should be developed to insure that the input from the discussion in groups is made available to the drafting process of the common account.

C. The 'Confession of faith we seek'

A special group should engage in the reflection on the possible future confession of faith. How do the churches approach the ultimate goal? The following issues could be canvassed in a preliminary way: the relation of the confession of faith to the concept of 'conciliar fellowship', the issue of unity and diversity or oneness and plurality, the role of the teaching authority of the churches, etc.

Again, a preliminary draft may be required to stimulate and guide the discussion.

Following the discussion the paper was referred to Group I to be discussed in connection with the preparations for the meeting of the Plenary Commission at Bangalore.

(b) Meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission, Bangalore 1978

In addition to this proposal, the Standing Commission received a detailed report on the facilities offered at the Ecumenical Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, and its suitability for housing the meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission in 1978. The Director of the Centre, Rev. M.A. Thomas, had expressed interest in receiving the Commission and promised that he would do his best to offer good working conditions. Mr Thomas created the Centre and had been its director for many years, and both he and his staff were experienced in receiving ecumenical groups. The centre was at some distance from Bangalore and was easily reached by road; the distance from the airport was 8 miles. Bangalore was a centre of theological schools and had a community of more than 1000 students of theology in the various seminaries in the city, all of which would be in session at the time proposed for the meeting. Mr Thomas would wish the meeting, if the Commission decided to go to Bangalore, to have some impact on the churches in India and he therefore proposed to organise a

consultation for church leaders at the Ecumenical Centre in January/February 1978 in preparation for the Commission meeting.

After some preliminary discussion and the expression of general approval to holding the meeting in Bangalore on the dates proposed, the matter was remitted to Group I for detailed consideration.

(c) Programme Proposals of Standing Commission for the Meeting of the Plenary Commission at Bangalore

At a later session Professor Lochman reported on the discussion in Group I. After further discussion an outline plan for the meeting of the Commission was ADOPTED as follows, responsibility for detailed planning being remitted to the Secretariat:

I. Place. It was AGREED -

that the meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission in 1978 be held at the Ecumenical Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore, and that the Standing Commission express its gratitude to Mr M.A. Thomas for the welcome extended to the meeting.

Note: It is hoped that significant exposure to Asian/Indian culture will be a part of the experience, and it is recommended that plans be formulated for appropriate meetings or relationships with the theological schools and students in the area; also that there shall be collaboration with a local committee regarding participation in local church life.

II. Date and Travel. It was AGREED -

that the meeting be held from August 15 - 31, 1978, Standing Commission members being asked to reserve the dates August 14 - 31.

Note: It may be possible to cut this schedule by one or two days, depending on the availability of travel facilities. Final dates will be confirmed by October 1, 1977. In deciding upon the final dates, the Secretariat is asked to consider both the technical arrangements governing travel rates etc. and the time needed to fulfil the goal and projected content of the meeting.

III. Structure, Style and Agenda. It is proposed -

1. that the basic structure proposed in the document presented to the Standing Commission be adopted;
2. that worship experiences be an integral part of the context of the meeting;

3. that the work of the groups and the committees be kept in continual inter-connection and that care be taken to engage the participants as soon as possible in the main work of the meeting, while recognizing the need for adjustment time and for some orientation, especially for new members.

Note: With these perspectives in mind the following is suggested as a possible programme for the opening period of the meeting: (a) a service of worship planned in consultation with the local churches; (b) presentation of the report of the Secretariat on Faith and Order work and perspectives; (c) discussion in groups which do not have the assignment of specific tasks but who are asked to respond to Faith and Order work through sharing from their own backgrounds, personally, regionally and so on, and who are urged to begin to define who they are in relation to the Commission and their ongoing relationship with it.

4. that the following preparatory work be initiated:

(a) During the period leading up to the meeting in Bangalore the second stage of the study 'Giving Account of the Hope' should be embarked upon. Work should begin as speedily as possible on the production of a number of preparatory papers emanating from various regions of the world or representing specific concerns. These papers, hopefully to be ready by January 1, 1978, will form the input for a consultation to take place in the early part of March 1978, which will have the task of producing a tentative statement on the Common Account of Hope: the consultation should take cognisance of the content of the preparatory papers in the light of its own theological judgment and produce the first draft of the common account towards which the study is working. The proposed 'common account' together with the preparatory papers will be sent to all members of the Commission and to all other participants in the Bangalore meeting.

(b) For a number of papers to be prepared for the meeting in March arrangements were made at Loccum:

- i. Statement from Eastern Europe - Dr Kühn to be responsible for an evaluation of the two statements from Eastern Europe presented at Accra, combining this with other aspects relating to the churches' witness in Eastern Europe; if possible, a meeting of Commission members from East European countries to be convened to discuss the paper;

- ii. Statement from Western Europe - A theologian from Western Europe to be invited to offer a paper giving some reflections arising from the statement of the Dutch Council of Churches, and relating also to the statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference in the Federal Republic of Germany;
- iii. Statement from North America - Dr Lara-Braud to be responsible, with such help as he may wish to secure, for surveying statements produced in the United States;
- iv. Statement from Latin America - To emerge from a meeting to be held in San José (Costa Rica) from December 11-16, 1977 (Rev. Plutarco Bonilla)
- v. Statement from Asia - Dr Song to be responsible for preparing a paper based upon material emanating from the recent Assembly of the Christian Conference in Asia in Penang and other Asian attempts at articulating faith;
- vi. Statement providing background for the dialogue between Faith and Science - Professor Lochman to be responsible.

The staff will have the responsibility of completing the list.

- (c) Procedure for preparatory work relating to 'The Visible Unity of the Church: Goal and Way' is outlined below (see p. 22f).
5. It is suggested that the broad outline of the programme of the meeting should be on the following lines:
 - (a) Opening actions, including presentation of report of Secretariat;
 - (b) Plenary presentation of preparatory paper on the Common Account;
 - (c) The following days to be spent in groups for discussion of the Common Account; a drafter to be appointed to each group to work on a revision of the Common Account in the light of the group discussion;
 - (d) For the second major part of the meeting the Commission to be divided into various committees (4-6) to discuss aspects of the ongoing work of the Commission. The major theme for these committees might be: the meaning of consensus, the sub-titles might include: i) unity in one faith, ii) consensus on Baptism, the Eucharist and the

- Ministry, iii) reception, iv) the unity we seek;
- (e) Plenary presentation of the revised statement on the Common Account;
- (f) Discussion in plenary of committee reports;
- (g) Closing actions.

ii) 'Towards an Ecumenical Consensus on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry'

Dr Bert Hoedemaker spoke to the report of the consultation held at Crêt-Bérard (near Lausanne), May '0 - June 4, 1977, copies of which were in the hands of members. The consultation had the difficult task of evaluating the replies of the churches to the agreed statements adopted at the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Accra. Obviously, there was more agreement on Baptism and the Eucharist than on the Ministry. On Baptism and Eucharist something like a common language was beginning to develop. Of course, many churches still feel the need for further reflection even on the meaning of Baptism (especially in its relation to confirmation) and on the Eucharist. But there seems to be a common framework in which the controversies regarding Baptism and Eucharist can be jointly reviewed.

The report of the consultation at Crêt-Bérard did not attempt to formulate official agreement between the churches. Its intention was to lift the debate to a new level and to formulate guidelines for future discussion.

Dr Vischer said that the intention of the report was to present 'a reply to the replies' from the churches. It was addressed to the Central Committee in the hope that the Committee would adopt and send it to the member churches. It was necessary, therefore, for the Standing Commission to examine the report with this in mind and consider whether in its present form it was the right document to address to the churches. It was proposed that a revision of the Statements should be prepared for the next Assembly of the World Council. This proposal had far-reaching consequences for the Faith and Order Commission since it laid on it new responsibility for action and initiative and forced on it a new style of working. Future work was to be done in more direct and close collaboration with the churches themselves. The report should go to the churches as a first communication, acknowledging the responses received and suggesting ways of continuing the exercise. The group in Crêt-Bérard had strongly pressed that in addition individual replies should be sent taking up the arguments made in the responses, countering some of the criticisms, and inviting a new input.

In the discussion following the presentation of the report Dr Lara-Braud asked if there was any value in continuing to press for replies: if so members of the Standing Commission had a responsibility for following this up. How did such documents reach the level of church life which was not the ecumenical élite? How could the material become part of the

required reading of those training for the ministry? Bishop Tutu thought we were proceeding in too western a way. A number of things discussed in the documents could not be considered relevant to the life of the local churches. There was an obsession on the part of church leaders to split hairs rather than get on with the business of being the Church. Mrs Mahoney emphasized that the question of the sacraments was not important to some churches in her area (Congo-Brazzaville) because they did not observe the sacraments (Salvation Army). It might be worth getting a more detailed explanation of their understanding of baptism and its relationship to the gift of the Holy Spirit. She urged that we should not appear to be taking a negative stand against churches which did not share in the consensus and should recognize that some churches do not accept the sacraments. Dr Hoedemaker said this point had not been overlooked at the Crêt-Bérard consultation; the consultation had included a representative of the Society of Friends. Mr Conway asked whether it was possible to invite the churches to consider the statements together on a regional or national basis. Dr West said that the consultation at Crêt-Bérard had been given the task of summarizing and commenting upon the replies with a view to submitting a report to the Standing Commission for transmission to Central Committee as part of the ongoing process. He hoped we could concentrate on an introductory section and the recommendations on the last page. Dom Laine thought the recommendations to the churches should be made more positive and that they should be asked to consider the report as a common basis for official discussion and as a common understanding of Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry to which some churches had subscribed. Dr Asheim thought there should be more discussion of the recommendations before they were transmitted to the churches; it might be wiser to make fewer recommendations on which it might be expected that churches would take action.

A number of textual criticisms and suggestions for amendment to the report were put forward and the Moderator asked that these should be put in writing and passed to Dr West for the consideration of Group II. The report was then remitted to Group II for discussion, with the request that a draft statement might be prepared on the meaning of the term 'consensus'; that the report be revised in the light of the plenary discussion; and that the text of a covering letter be prepared which the Secretariat might use when the report will be sent to the churches.

At a later session Dr West, on behalf of Group II, presented the following documents:

- A. A statement on 'The Meaning of Consensus'
- B. Proposed textual changes for Chapter II of the Report - the Present State of the Consensus Debate
- C. Revision of Section III - Suggestions and Recommendations
- D. Proposed text of covering letter for submission to Central Committee

After further discussion and the adoption of one or two minor amendments to the documents, it was AGREED that the Report be revised in the light of the documents presented by Group II, and submitted to Central Committee together with the proposed text of the covering letter to the churches. It was further AGREED that the following tentative time-table and procedures for forwarding work on the three agreed statements be ADOPTED:

August 1977 - August 1979

A 'support group' must be provided for the Faith and Order Secretariat to undertake the following tasks:

- (a) To draft and send replies to the churches which have responded to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry documents. In this connection it is suggested that where there are members of responding churches on the Standing Commission then the draft of the proposed reply might be sent to them for comment.
- (b) To analyze any replies that come in either to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry or even possibly to Towards an Ecumenical Consensus.
- (c) To prepare material for Bangalore on the developing consensus on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. This paper at least will:
 - i. summarize the process thus far
 - ii. analyze the present position
 - iii. pinpoint issues which might usefully be discussed by the Plenary Commission
 - iv. evaluate procedures thus far and suggest priorities for the project beyond Bangalore.
- (d) To indicate matters or replies which might be referred for independent comment, e.g. to Ecumenical Institutes, etc. Some of these might initially be allocated to the responsibility of individual members of the Plenary Commission at Bangalore to further in their own areas.

This support group could consist of Bert Hoedemaker, Max Thurian, Nils Ehrenström plus, say, two others, who might well be drawn from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

The next circular letter to all members of the Plenary Commission should bring them up to date on the situation of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and Towards an Ecumenical Consensus and also indicate possibly which churches have responded.

August 1978

Bangalore Plenary Commission should work on the project though not as its major concern and should be asked to authorize the Standing Commission to continue to develop its work.

August 1978 - August 1981

It is anticipated that towards the end of 1978 the responses to Towards an Ecumenical Consensus will be arriving and Bangalore will have determined the priorities for study. We judge that it will be necessary to have three consultative groups, one on each topic of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, working throughout these three years in conjunction with the Secretariat and reporting to the Standing Commission.

July/August 1979

Standing Commission will have an interim report on how matters stand and will need to take decisions for the future in the light of the report.

July/August 1980

The Standing Commission will need to have a considerable part of its time to devote to the consensus question in the context of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and to prepare material for the Plenary Commission meeting in 1981.

(NB: It may be both possible and necessary to begin serious work on the new document in 1979.)

1981

Plenary Commission will prepare text of the new statements for the 1982 Assembly.

iii) Faith and Order's Church Unity Work in the Light of Nairobi's Section II Report: 'What Unity Requires' - The Visible Unity of the Church: Goal and Way'

A. Presentation of the Issues

Dr Vischer said it had been hoped that Professor Deschner would present a major report on 'What Unity Requires'. He had sent a summary outline, copies of which were in the hands of the members. It reads as follows:

1. The Purpose of this Outline

- A. To gain an overview of Faith and Order's many-sided work for church unity ...
- B. In order to help the Standing Commission propose to Bangalore a church unity initiative for the succeeding triennium (1978-1981) which can lay the foundations for a significant contribution to the Sixth Assembly (ca. 1983)

- II. 'Conciliar Fellowship' as a Focal Theme for Faith and Order's Church Unity Work
- A. Visible church unity: the raison d'être of Faith and Order, and the prime mandate of the World Council of Churches
 - B. The historic Faith and Order work toward inter-denominational unity
 - C. Recent attempts to broaden the work by relating church unity to divisive issues in human community
 - D. Our most recent efforts to focus both thrusts under the theme of conciliar fellowship
- III. Section II's Analysis of Conciliar Fellowship and its Implications
- A. The Section II Report 'What Unity Requires' in Outline
 1. Foreword: thanksgiving and doxology
 2. Unity requires a commonly accepted goal: conciliar fellowship as goal in our present pre-conciliar situation
 3. Unity requires a fuller understanding of the context: various aspects of the secular context viewed as urgent reasons for new initiatives in church unity (i.e. toward full conciliar fellowship)
 4. Unity requires companionship in struggle and hope: the familiar problems (and impasse!) in our historic Faith and Order work viewed with fresh impatience, urgency and hope
 5. Implications and recommendations
 - i. Common confession of faith
 - ii. Fuller sharing
 - iii. Review of ecumenical commitment
 - iv. Three specific studies
 - B. The Achievement of Section II

'Conciliar fellowship' sets the church unity theme and work in motion again: a new comprehensiveness and relevance (chap. 3 on context); a new purposiveness (chap. 2 on goal); fresh practical recommendations (chap. 5)
 - C. The Growing Edge of Section II's Report

'Conciliar fellowship' poses concrete theological tasks:

 1. Not so much the elaborative theological work of chap. 2
 2. Nor the collaborative work of chap. 3

3. But in the concrete and practical theological work of chap. 5: stimulating the vision, inauguration and will of the churches to move from 'conversation' to actions which will increase and anticipate conciliar fellowship

IV. Faith and Order's Present Church Unity Agenda Integrated under the Recommendations of Section II

- A. (Recco. 1) Toward a Common Confession of Christian Truth as Essential to Conciliar Fellowship
 1. The 'Account of Hope' work as it looks toward and contributes to an eventual common confession of faith
 2. The study 'How the Church Teaches Authoritatively'
 3. The continuing studies on 'The Authority of the Bible'
 4. The Joint Working Group studies on 'Common Witness'
- B. (Recco. 2) Toward a Fuller Sharing among the Churches, 'Heralding' a Fuller Conciliar Fellowship
(Our present agenda is weak here.)
 5. The development of a Prayer Calendar for Mutual Intercession, and the work on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
 6. The 'Ecumenical Exercises' by which first contacts with non-member churches are developed
- C. (Recco. 3) Toward a Fresh Review of Ecumenical Commitments in the Light of the Goal of Conciliar Fellowship
 7. The 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' work toward ecumenical consensus
 8. The work with World Confessional Families, especially toward a 'Forum'
 9. The work with United Churches and with church union negotiations
- D. (Recco. 4) Further Contextual and Conciliar Fellowship Studies
 10. The 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Humankind' studies (women, racism, disabled, dialogue), including the 'Church-State' study
 11. Further study of 'conciliar fellowship' as such, especially of pre-conciliar/conciliar stages, of the 'local church', and of eucharist, ministry and authority as these bear on conciliar fellowship

V. Looking Ahead

- A. A possible sharpening of the focus: 'On the Way to a Genuinely Conciliar Gathering' (quoting Uppsala)
 - B. Six main steps 'on the way' (based on several Faith and Order documents)
 1. The presupposed local conciliar fellowship
 2. A valid and effective call for a conciliar gathering
 3. A mutually recognizable representation of the People of God
 4. A common act of worship culminating in eucharistic fellowship
 5. A common act of confession of the apostolic faith as a common contemporary act of witness
 6. A universal reception of this confession among the churches
 - C. A critical review of the Faith and Order agenda in the light of these six steps
 - D. First thoughts about the 1978-1981 Faith and Order programme and the Faith and Order contribution to the Sixth Assembly
- VI. A Document on 'Church Unity' for Bangalore 1978 based on Standing Commission discussion of some such outline as the foregoing? Prepared by a small team for distribution before Bangalore? Discussed at Bangalore, but - in the agenda of that meeting - as subsidiary to the 'Account of Hope' theme?

Speaking to Prof. Deschner's outline Dr Vischer said that a first attempt to describe 'the unity we seek' was made at the New Delhi Assembly (1961) but that the Nairobi Assembly had taken further steps by proposing to the churches the concept of 'conciliar fellowship'. It had now become a key word in the debate on unity. The new step at the level of conceptual clarification had been accompanied by a new commitment. The World Council of Churches had adopted a new Constitution which for the first time expressed the search for 'visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship' as one of the fundamental purposes of the Council. How do we give full expression to this new stage in the search for unity? How could the Faith and Order Commission help the membership on its way to that goal?

It was proposed that work should begin on the preparation of a paper listing the issues arising out of the Nairobi report on 'What Unity Requires' (Section II), outlining the main problems and indicating the issues to which attention should primarily be directed. The Commission could not start early enough to prepare its input to the next Assembly: this

might seem premature but it should be borne in mind that the discussion of conciliar fellowship leading to the report of Section II had started in 1969 and it had taken six years to test and mature the idea to the point when an assembly could consider and respond to it.

Some clarification was needed regarding the role of Faith and Order. Was it to be regarded simply as a 'think tank' generating ideas to send out to the churches, or as a focal point in the search for unity? How could the work of the Commission be so directed as to take root in the thinking of the community? Should we seek for the Commission a pastoral role?

Prof. Deschner had stated the purpose of his outline as (i) to give an overview of Faith and Order's many-sided work for church unity; and (ii) to help the Standing Commission to propose to Bangalore a church unity initiative for the succeeding triennium (1978-1981) which can lay the foundations for a significant contribution to the Sixth Assembly (ca. 1983).

B. Discussion

The Chairman invited discussion of Prof. Deschner's outline and Dr Vischer's presentation. Dr West considered it essential that in the whole operation of moving toward the unity of the Church we must relate to Section I at Nairobi - 'Confessing Jesus Christ Today'. The main difficulty in achieving progress had been at the denominational level, not in Faith and Order or at the local level. Dr Pröbkle emphasized that our fathers had come together to discuss the question of the community of faith because of their community in service. Today the experience of churches in socialist countries led to a strengthening of the feeling of community. We were a community of Christians in the world faced by a common challenge. Fr Borovoy suggested that the difference between Lausanne 1927 and Faith and Order today was that the Commission no longer consisted of influential church leaders but of what he described as a 'middle class' of church leaders. Dr Kühn asked whether it was realistic to think that in future the historical confessions would cease to exist. Bishop Tutu referred to the difficulty of translation, of making plain in other languages the real meaning of the term 'conciliar fellowship'. There was a deep urgency and a growing need for a church that is one. Perhaps the role of Faith and Order was to issue a strong call to the churches to take the matter of unity seriously. Mr Conway suggested three types of ecumenical fellowship as indicating steps on the way - (a) the voluntary association; (b) the local councils of churches; (c) areas of ecumenical experiment or local ecumenical projects. We should start from the other end and discover what is happening in various areas which could be set against the official theological statements of the churches. Dr Asheim thought the churches would expect that before turning to the next Assembly we should try to interpret the Nairobi report, especially its concept of conciliar fellowship. The first task was to make a strong effort to confess Christian truth together, and the role of Faith and Order should be to force the ecumenical movement to speak to its main purpose. The danger was that in a vast range of different projects it

should lose the focus of its being. Other things might capture the headlines but Faith and Order was the crux of the ecumenical movement. Ms Parvey saw a tension between the church as a movement and the church as an institution. The issues under consideration had a deep urgency but it was important to look with openness at the actual situation in which the churches lived and to distinguish between the possible and the impossible. Fr Duprey compared the confessional traditions to orders like, for instance, the Society of Jesus, which represented a certain style of Christian life but was also characterized by a strong presbyteral organization within the Catholic Church. In a future united church confessional traditions could have continuing life in the same way as orders have distinctive life within the Roman Catholic Church. Prof. Pannenberg suggested that the time had come when we should express once more the concepts lying behind our search for unity. This was the more urgent because of the reluctance to draw consequences from the agreements reached in many areas of doctrine. Any statement now produced should be in simple language, theological in character, and should be short if it was to be addressed not only to informed circles but to the churches generally. One of the contributions made by Faith and Order was the part it had taken in shaking the complacency of the churches and their confidence in identifying themselves as 'the Church'. We should address ourselves openly to this and to the mood of despair concerning the stepping over of the barriers which separate us. Dr Song said that true conciliar fellowship presupposed the unity of the Church. If we wanted a simple understanding of the concept of conciliar fellowship we should look at the fruits of the unions which have come into existence and see what kind of conciliar fellowship emerges from those churches.

The matter was then referred to Group III for further discussion and report.

C. Conclusions

At a later session Dr Lara-Braud presented the report of Group III. The group had attempted to re-focus the issues of Church Unity in the life of the churches and in the future work of Faith and Order, and to integrate these critical issues around the concept of conciliar fellowship. An annotated outline had been prepared and it was hoped that this might be submitted to a small consultation so that it might be developed before the end of 1977 into a preparatory document for submission to the Bangalore meeting. After discussion at Bangalore a revised text might be prepared for presentation to the next Assembly. During the ensuing discussion emphasis was laid on the fact that the proposed paper on 'The Visible Unity of the Church: Goal and Way' would form the major input for the work of the Committees during the second stage of the Commission meeting in Bangalore. It was therefore important that work should be put in hand on its preparation with as little delay as possible. Among the suggestions made for consideration in relation to the preparatory work were: (a) There should be an examination of work already done on the concept of conciliar fellowship; (b) Consultation should be had with people concerned with the work of Faith and Order outside the immediate member-

ship of the Commission, including those engaged in bilateral conversations and church union negotiations; (c) In seeking a fuller understanding of conciliar fellowship consideration should be given to the concept of koinonia at all levels of the life of the Church; (d) The relational aspect of the concept of conciliarity should be borne in mind, including the relevance of the reports of other sections at Nairobi as well as of Section II.

Procedure: On the proposal of the Moderator it was AGREED -

- (a) that members of the Standing Commission be asked to send in to the Secretariat as soon as possible their comments and suggestions in regard to the drafting of a preparatory paper for the Bangalore meeting on 'The Visible Unity of the Church: Goal and Way';
- (b) that the Secretariat, in consultation with the Moderator and other advisers, should work on the draft of the document in preparation for its discussion in a small consultation to be convened at as early a date as possible;
- (c) that the document, as revised by the consultation, be circulated to all members of the Standing Commission for comment;
- (d) that in the light of such comment and of any further consultation deemed necessary a final document be prepared for circulation as a preparatory paper for the meeting of the Commission in Bangalore.

iv) The Community of Women and Men in the Church as Sign for the World

Dr Vischer reminded members that the Core Group had spent some time in planning the study (see For the Years Ahead, p. 10ff) and the minutes of the Faith and Order meeting last year indicated a number of issues in the study which would directly affect the work of Faith and Order, e.g. the theology of the Bible, the place of women in the Church, the ordination of women, Mariology. Ms Parvey presented plans for the Study on the Community of Women and Men in the Church. She had been appointed to take responsibility for leading the study and would be moving to Geneva at the end of the year to take up her work on January 1, 1978.

The report was remitted to Group IV for consideration. At a later session Ms Powers presented the report of the group. After some discussion the report was ADOPTED; it reads as follows:

1. Why is it important that this study be a theological study?

Here it was felt that we must move beyond our acknowledgment of sexism in Scripture and tradition and look toward those foundation points in Scripture and tradition that can build a new community, and give a new identity to the Community of Women and Men in the Church.

2. What are some of the theological issues involved?

Here the issues of (i) biblical methodology and interpretation; (ii) language - signs, symbols, and images; (iii) the Church as a sign of the new humanity, and (iv) questions around the issue of women and men in the economy of salvation, were discussed.

3. To whom should the invitation for the study be addressed?

It was recommended that a letter be sent to the churches inviting them to participate and that church organizations and groups work on the study in diverse styles, keeping in mind both the importance of hearing the new contribution coming from women, and the importance of our creating new arenas for dialogue between women and men in the Church.

4. How do we prepare now for our committee work and general participation in the Faith and Order meeting in Bangalore?

Here it was recommended that we begin now to develop our agenda for future studies and come prepared at Bangalore with study papers and proposed resource persons.

It was also suggested that, since it is a new study which needs to be introduced to the whole Commission, it might be the subject for a plenary, a general form of which might be: The New Humanity: the New Eve, the New Adam.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since this is a new study, it seems appropriate for us to begin expressing our appreciation to the Central Committee for the action that makes possible the undertaking of the study, now three years in the process of formation, beginning with the consultation in Berlin in 1974 and the Faith and Order Commission meeting in Accra.

2. We also express our appreciation that sufficient funds for the study have been received to enable the appointment of the Rev. Constance F. Parvey as Study Secretary for the implementation of the

programme; it is noted that further financial support will be required as the study proceeds.

3. In response to the Central Committee's directive that a Core Group be established for the study, consisting of two persons from the Unit III sub-unit and two persons from Faith and Order, the Standing Commission nominates the Rev. Wesley Ariarajah and Mrs Mary Tanner as its representatives.

4. The Faith and Order Commission accepts the general outline of the proposed programme for the study, recognizing that this reflects a beginning stage in the establishment of this programme.

Major elements in the programme outline include:

- (a) An invitation to be sent to the churches, taking into account the first responses to the study received through the circulation of the first outline of the Community of Women and Men Study ('the purple book').
- (b) The method of the study will be contextual and the focus of the study will be in the regions. The invitation will invite churches and church organizations in the regions to lift up their major and special concerns within the context of their particular church tradition and cultural pattern. The study will enable 'ignition points' within the regions and encourage the first stage dialogue on regional levels.
- (c) A date for an international consultation on the Community of Women and Men Study has been suggested for later in the year 1979. (Out of this might come a 'Message to the churches').
- (d) The Study plans to search for and generate relevant papers and publications on issues which emerge related to the Community of Women and Men in the Church Study.

5. The Faith and Order Standing Commission recommends that the Community of Women and Men Study relate to all areas of Faith and Order work, giving special attention to the following points of entry:

- (a) The Community of Women and Men: The Search for a Sign of Unity
- (b) The Community of Women and Men: The Language, Symbols and Images
- (c) The Community of Women and Men: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, including attention to the section referring to the ordination of women.

v) Recommendations on Other Matters Arising from the Staff Report

The report of the ad hoc group was presented by Ms Powers at a later session and after discussion the following recommendations were ADOPTED:

(i) Election of Vice-Moderators

that the following be elected as Vice-Moderators of the Commission:

Rev. Wesley Ariarajah
 Professor John Deschner
 Mrs Florence Mahoney
 Rev. Fr. Jean Tillard

(ii) Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations

- (a) that letters of appreciation be addressed by the Moderator to those who contributed to the celebrations of the 50th anniversary in Lausanne as follows:

The Reformed Church of the Canton de Vaud
 (Pastor Jean-Daniel Chapuis)
 The Youth Council of Taizé
 (Frère Roger)
 The International Ecumenical Fellowship
 (Rev. Christopher Lowe)
 The Focolari Movement
 (Miss Chiara Lubich)
 The Secretary of State at the Vatican
 (H.E. Cardinal Villot)

- (b) that the offering of Sfr 3000 taken during the worship service for the purpose of symbolic acts of solidarity shall be disbursed at the discretion of the Secretariat, on the understanding that a donation shall be made to the family of Dean Nam Dong Suh.

(iii) Dialogue in Community (Chiangmai document)

1. We welcome the efforts made in Chiangmai to study some of the basic issues raised in Nairobi in collaboration with the whole of Unit I. We find that the 'pause for reflection' at Chiangmai had been a definite step forward in clarifying some of the issues which the two sub-units face in their work. The document has been received by the Standing Commission as a challenge to pursue the collaborative work.

2. We welcome the references in the document to specific areas where collaboration between the sub-unit on Dialogue and the Commission on Faith and Order would be useful. In para. 13, for example,

there is an explicit reference to the need for close relation between the concern for dialogue and the common effort for visible unity of the Church. The call to dialogue is at the same time a call to unity among Christians and the issues concerning the unity of the Church need to be re-examined in the perspective of dialogue with people of living faiths and ideologies.

3). The Commission also identified many theological issues raised in the document for further reflection and study, which are of interest to both departments, and may call for some collaborative effort. In para. 12, for example, there is a list of ways in which the experience of the Christian community has been expressed, which adopts different styles and languages in describing the nature of that communion.

There are other issues raised, particularly in paras. 23 and 24, on such matters as:

- (a) the theological significance of the people of other faiths
- (b) relationship between creation and redemption
- (c) the authority of the Scripture, particularly the Old Testament, and its relation to other scriptures
- (d) the doctrine of the spirit.

We recognized that in some areas such as the authority of the Old Testament, there is already a study process in Faith and Order which can both inform and also be informed by the concerns raised from within the concern for dialogue. The Commission also saw distinctive possibilities of studying the theme as it relates to those religious traditions which share the common heritage of the Old Testament as of those who do not.

Collaborative efforts in these areas, as also in those others which arise as we continue the process, will help the Commission on Faith and Order to raise and deal with those questions which are of immediate relevance to life-situations. On the other hand, it will also help those engaged in dialogue to speak from within the concern for the visible unity of all who hear His name.

We welcome the statement from Chiangmai and look forward to further collaborative work in the future.

(iv) United Nations Year of the Handicapped

- (a) that churches be encouraged to highlight the United Nations Year of the Handicapped 1981, and to prepare for extensive and significant involvement of this emphasis;

- (b) that appreciation be expressed on behalf of the Standing Commission to Ms Barbara von Teichman for her work on the publication 'The Unity of the Church and the Handicapped'.

(v) Calendar of Mutual Intercession

- (a) that the production of the Prayer Cycle be proceeded with as quickly as possible;
- (b) that the general idea as well as the list of churches and their distribution over the year be made available as soon as possible, in mimeographed form;
- (c) that a special effort of promotion be made at Pentecost 1978 and that the Presidents of the World Council be invited to emphasize the subject of mutual intercession in their Pentecost message for 1978;
- (d) that the period from 1 October 1977 to February 1978 be used as a trial period for the projected book;
- (e) that the full Prayer Cycle (with introductions, prayers, etc.) be available in printed form in as many languages as possible by the end of 1978, and the Week of Prayer in January 1979 be used to launch it;
- (f) that participants in the Plenary Commission meeting in Bangalore receive copies of the Calendar and be encouraged to use it.

(vi) Doctoral Dissertations

that in expressing appreciation at the completion of the publication 'Doctoral Dissertations on Ecumenical Themes', the Standing Commission urges that members should take responsibility for seeing that copies are distributed in regional areas where it can be used; Commission members, Faith and Order 'friends', theological seminaries, councils of churches and theological societies are natural avenues for distribution; readers should be encouraged to submit to the Secretariat titles of other dissertations which are not included, so that a further and more complete publication may be possible in three years' time.

(vii) Staffing

- (a) that the Standing Commission endorse the expression of appreciation voiced by the Secretariat for the significant help given to the programme of the Faith and Order Commission

by Professor Nils Ehrenström, Dr Bert Hoedemaker, Dr Anton Houtepen and Barbara von Teichmann;

- (b) that appreciation be expressed to Professor Nils Ehrenström for his invaluable contribution to the work of the Faith and Order Commission, in particular for the new project which he has undertaken: A case study on Ecumenical Guidelines. The Standing Commission emphasizes the importance of the project and its close relation to the study 'How does the Church teach authoritatively today?'; it expresses gratitude to the various World Confessional Families for their response and invites their further collaboration. The Standing Commission feels that the surveys on mutual recognition of baptism and on mixed marriages could be of particular value for future work;
- (c) that the Standing Commission express appreciation (1) to the University of Utrecht for its willingness to second Dr Anton Houtepen to the Faith and Order Commission for two months to assist in preparations for the consultation on 'How does the Church teach authoritatively today?', and (2) to the Russian Orthodox Church for its invitation to hold the consultation in Odessa (October 9-16, 1977);
- (d) bearing in mind that it has not been possible to fill one of the full-time positions in the Secretariat for more than two years due to lack of funds, and the urgent need for Orthodox presence on the staff, it is proposed that the authorities of the World Council of Churches be requested to restore the post;
- (e) that the Standing Commission wishes to record its deep appreciation to the members of the Faith and Order Secretariat for their extensive and significant work during the past year; the leadership provided in helping the churches on their way to Christian unity has been especially remarkable in view of the small number of full-time staff persons available this year, thus requiring each member of the staff to work well beyond the time capacity.

(viii) Finance

that members of the Standing Commission be urged to take responsibility within their own communions for securing funds for special projects undertaken by the Faith and Order Commission, especially for the following studies:

- (a) Giving Account of the Hope that is within us
- (b) Agreed Statements on Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry
- (c) The Community of Women and Men in the Church
- (d) How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today?
- (e) The Calendar of Mutual Intercession.

IV CLOSING ACTIONS

The Moderator, in drawing the meeting to a close, thanked the members for their patience: the week had been a busy one with little free time but he felt it had been fruitful and in working and talking together there had been increasingly close fellowship, deepened by our common worship and the knowledge that all were sharing in a common task. In looking ahead to the future we could do so in hope, and with a deep feeling of gratitude to those who had gone before and prepared the way. The Moderator said he knew he was voicing the feeling of every member of the Standing Commission in expressing a special word of thanks to the members of the Secretariat, not only for the service they had rendered during the meeting but for the heavy task they carried on behalf of the Commission throughout the year. To all who had contributed to the success of the meeting a debt of thanks was owed. It had been a special pleasure to meet in the delightful surroundings of the Kloster, and the Standing Commission was particularly appreciative of the care which had been exercised by Miss Dannenberg and her staff to ensure the comfort and well-being of the members.

The closing service of worship was led by Dr C.S. Song.

Note: The findings and resolutions of the Standing Commission were brought to the attention of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches which met immediately afterwards in Geneva from July 28-August 6, 1977. The response of the Central Committee can be found in Appendix I (see below p.).

APPENDIX I

RESPONSE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONCERNING FAITH AND ORDER
(Extracts from Central Committee Document No. 37, p.5-7)

The Unit Committee received the report on the work of the Faith and Order Commission and the supplementary oral information on the recent meeting of the Faith and Order Standing Commission (Loccum, FRG, July 18-25). The programme items of the Faith and Order Commission can be grouped around the following main themes: (a) towards unity in one faith, (b) towards unity in one eucharistic fellowship, (c) towards a deeper quality of unity.

(A) Giving Account of the Hope that is within us

The Unit Committee noted that this study will provide the main focus for the Plenary meeting of the Faith and Order Commission which will be held from August 15-31, 1978, in Bangalore, India. According to the plans worked out by the Standing Commission the discussion will concentrate on 'the common ground' of hope. The preparations will be based on input already available from the various regions. The Plenary Commission will also discuss the issue of sharing in the one apostolic faith.

The Unit Committee welcomed close collaboration with the Sub-Unit on Youth to ensure the participation of young people in the meeting.

(B) Baptism, Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry

The Unit Committee received the report on the replies of the churches to the three agreed statements on 'One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry' and endorsed the recommendation which it contains. The Unit Committee recommended and the Central Committee agreed that the Faith and Order Commission be authorized to send the report of the Standing Commission together with the text of the presentation by the director of the Faith and Order Secretariat to the member churches and pursue the study as proposed. It expressed the hope that a revised text can be prepared for the next Assembly and appealed to the member churches to collaborate in the elaboration of the revision.

In the discussion the following additional suggestions were made:

- i. As far as possible the agreed statements should be discussed not only by the churches individually, but also by churches of one region together (e.g. by regional and national councils).
- ii. Special attention should be paid to particular contexts, e.g. cultural contexts which modify the presuppositions of the debate on the subject.

- iii. An effort should be undertaken to bring into contact churches which differ significantly on certain aspects, e.g. churches which practise believers' baptism and those which also practise infant baptism.

The Unit Committee noted with satisfaction that the annual meeting of Secretaries of World Confessional Families had agreed to the setting up of a Forum on bilateral conversations and had asked the Faith and Order Commission to accept responsibility for planning and administration. At present three sessions are envisaged on (a) concepts of unity, (b) the nature of agreed statements and (c) reception. The first session is scheduled to take place in early April 1978, at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey.

(C) Unity of the Church and Unity of Humankind

The Report of the Fifth Assembly on 'What Unity Requires' paid special attention to the quality of Christian fellowship; as examples for this concern it referred to fellowship within different political commitments, to the community of women and men in the Church, to fellowship across racial and cultural barriers and to the place and role of disabled people in the Church. It also underlined the need for mutual intercession.

The Faith and Order Commission is engaged in collaborative efforts in this field, e.g. with the Programme to Combat Racism. The Faith and Order Standing Commission has declared its readiness to participate in the follow-up of the Chiangmai Consultation on 'Dialogue in Community', especially in the discussion of issues which have a direct bearing on the unity of the Church and of humankind. The Committee welcomed these developments and made the following specific recommendations:

1. The Role of the Disabled in the Church

In response to the discussion at its Louvain meeting, the Faith and Order Commission is engaged in preparing a volume on the 'Role of the Disabled in the Church'. Though welcoming this initiative the Unit Committee felt that the issue requires more sustained attention and recommended that ways be explored to give it more prominence in the WCC programme. This is of particular importance as the United Nations have declared 1981 as the 'Year of the Disabled'; the churches should prepare their contribution for this year. Several sub-units are engaged in some activities in this field. The Committee suggests that the General Secretary appoint a staff task force and entrust it with the task to study the possibility of intensifying the efforts and to report to the Central Committee in January 1979. The task force should undertake its exploration in close contact with bodies and individuals in the churches already engaged in study and action in this field. The Central Committee approved this proposal.

2. Calendar of Mutual Intercession

On the recommendation of the Unit Committee, the Central Committee welcomed the proposal of a calendar of mutual intercession to be made available to the member churches in 1978. It called upon the member churches to introduce it in their congregations. It suggested that Pentecost 1978 and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1979 be used to familiarize the congregations with the proposal.

3. The Community of Women and Men in the Church

The Unit Committee expressed its satisfaction with the fact that it has become possible to undertake the study on this theme, now three years in process of formation; and that funds have been received enabling a study secretary, the Rev. Dr. Constance Parvey from the Lutheran Church in America, to be appointed.

In response to the Central Committee guidelines from its 1976 meeting a project committee for the desk has been created comprised of representatives from both the Faith and Order Commission and the sub-unit on Women in Church and Society.

The Central Committee approved the general outline proposed for the study using a method of participation that is contextual, regional, reflective and active. It will include:

- (a) an invitation to be sent in 1978 to churches and other organizations to join in the study,
- (b) an international consultation in 1979 on the Community of Women and Men in the Church,
- (c) the engagement of the study in all areas of Faith and Order work.

APPENDIX II

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